



“A PROUD tradition of SERVICE  
through EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY,  
and COURTESY”

**ICHAT**  
[www.michigan.gov/ichat](http://www.michigan.gov/ichat)

## AGENCY INSTRUCTION GUIDE

(For Fee-Waived Agency Accounts)

**Save These Instructions for Future Use**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Hours of Operation and Contact Information.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Audit and Proper Usage.....	5
Registration.....	6
Passwords.....	7
Activation, Warrant Search and Changing Login.....	8
Agency Administrator.....	9
Change Agency Administrator.....	10
Background Search.....	10
Problems with Search.....	11
Computer Compatibility.....	12
To View and Print.....	13
Response.....	14
Missing Information.....	15
Additional Resources.....	16

# HOURS OF OPERATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Customer Service Hours  
Monday thru Friday  
8:00AM – 5:00PM

ICHAT  
Michigan State Police  
Criminal Justice Information Center  
P. O. Box 30634  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

ICHAT Coordinator Tel. (517) 241-0713  
ICHAT Help Desk Tel. (517) 241-0606  
Fax (517) 241-0866  
[MSP-CRD-ACCTHELP@michigan.gov](mailto:MSP-CRD-ACCTHELP@michigan.gov)

Access to ICHAT is Available 24/7



Agency Code: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome and thank you for using the ICHAT System. Keep these instructions for further use.

Please read these instructions carefully and let us know if you have any questions. Our contact information is listed on the second page of this guide and on the ICHAT Web site.

Write your agency code in the space above. This number can be found in the subject line on the e-mail you received. Please include the agency code in all correspondence you send to ICHAT.

The ICHAT system will search for a public criminal record "rapsheet" in the Michigan State Police - Criminal History Section files that match what is entered by the user. Although records prior to 1980 could be sporadic, all felonies and serious misdemeanors (those punishable by 93 days confinement or more) are required to be reported to our office by law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and courts in all 83 Michigan counties. Lesser misdemeanors (those punishable by 92 days or less confinement) may be reported to our office on an elective basis. Records that will not be found on ICHAT include cases which are non-public, records more than a year old without charge or court information, traffic records, local ordinance records, probation & court order violations, tribal records, federal records, arrest records from other states or cases where the individual was never fingerprinted.

By statute, ICHAT fees are waived per MCL 28.273, for all non-profit charitable organizations and government agencies, including schools and churches that use their code properly. Use of this service is to be considered a serious measure and must be protected. Do not share this code with anyone except for your most trusted staff. You and your organization are responsible for the activity on this account. Your use of ICHAT is restricted to conducting record checks on employees, applicants and volunteers (interns are considered volunteers). ICHAT is not to be used to screen the recipients of your services or screening license, housing or student applicants. Michigan Courts are allowed limited exceptions to this policy.

## AUDIT AND PROPER USAGE

Audits are conducted on the use of ICHAT to ensure that fee-waived agency accounts are utilized properly.

Each time your organization submits a fee-waived ICHAT search, you were required to agree with the following statement:

“I accept and understand that when submitting unpaid search requests on this system it is for the purpose of screening potential employees and/or volunteers for a non-profit organization or for a government agency or per MSP agreement. By accepting this agreement, our agency/organization is subject to audit by MSP staff. For audit purposes our agency/organization must maintain supporting documentation for 6 months after inquiry. Misuse of ICHAT could result in termination of our account.”

If you are chosen for audit, you will receive a notice in writing with a list of names being audited and instructions on how to proceed. Documentation that is sufficient in response during an audit include: employment applications, I9 or W2, proof of participation in a program or at minimum a signed consent form stating the person is affiliated with your organization and has consented to a background check. When submitting information for an audit, please remove social security numbers and driver's license numbers. Please save this documentation for at least six months.

Fee-waived accounts can only use ICHAT to screen employees, employment applicants, and volunteers (Interns are considered volunteers) for your organization. Other uses of ICHAT must be paid for. If, during an audit or at anytime your agency is found in violation of this, your account may be suspended.



## CREATING/ADDING A NEW ACCOUNT USER

### NEW AGENCY CODE-ALREADY REGISTERED IN ICHAT BEFORE:

You may add the agency code to your existing account by selecting the "My Account" option on the left side of the screen and selecting the "Manage Profile" button. Scroll down to the bottom, check the box verifying you are a government or non-profit agency, and enter the agency code and select "Save".

### NEW AGENCY CODE-HAVE NOT REGISTERED IN ICHAT BEFORE:

Go to: [www.michigan.gov/ichat](http://www.michigan.gov/ichat) (all lower case with no prefix or suffix)

Select "Register" and complete the registration page. When creating a password, follow the instructions located directly following this section. At the bottom of the "Registration" page, please check the box verifying you are a government or non-profit agency, then enter the agency code and select "Save".

You should receive in e-mail in approximately five minutes informing you that your account is active. If you do not receive this notification, send an e-mail to ICHAT asking for an activation code. Allow 1-2 business days for a response.

## CREATING A PASSWORD

When creating a password, please follow these rules:

Passwords are extremely case sensitive.

Please change your password every four months.

Passwords must have at least 6, but no more than 12 characters.

A Password must be a minimum of 1 letter., 1 number and 1 special (punctuation) character

(~`!@#\$%^&\*()\_!-+=<>,/).

A character may appear no more than three times consecutively or no more than four times in the entire password. (Sample: abc#444 is acceptable, abc@4444 is not acceptable.

Sample: 1a1b,1c1d is acceptable, 1a2a,3a4a5a is not acceptable, because there are too many a's.

## TO RE-SET A PASSWORD

To re-set a password, use one of the e-mail addresses listed under the “Contact” section of this packet to contact the ICHAT Help Desk requesting a password re-set. Please allow at least 1-2 days for a password re-set. You will receive an e-mail in response issuing you a temporary password. We would suggest you select a new password once you have logged in.

## IF YOU FORGOT YOUR PASSWORD

Just below the “sign-in” box on the ICHAT main page, you will see a link called “Forgot your password?” Select this link, input your email address, and answer the security question. This will allow you access to your account. You will be required to select a new password at this time. Entering an incorrect password three times will cause your account to lock you out. Follow the “Reset Password” instructions if this occurs.



## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

There are several tutorials located on the ICHAT home page. The “How to Use ICHAT” link may be helpful in performing tasks. There is additional information that may be helpful in the FAQ tab on the top header. You can also ask your question by sending us an e-mail from one of the e-mail addresses listed on the “Contact” page of this guide, or by the “Contact Us” link on the Web site.

## **ACTIVATION**

After completing the registration process, notification will be sent to your e-mail address, in which you registered with ICHAT, with account activation information. If you do not receive this notification within five minutes of setting up an account, send a message to ICHAT stating you need your account to be activated. Attempting to log in without activating your account will result in an error message. If you do not receive the activation e-mail within a few minutes, you should contact ICHAT on the “Contact Us” link asking for your ICHAT account to be activated. Once you are registered and your account is activated, you will just need to click “Login” to use ICHAT.

## **WARRANT SEARCH**

Disregard anything you see concerning warrants. Your organization is not authorized to view warrants in ICHAT, nor can it receive authorization.

## **CHANGING LOG-IN/E-MAIL ADDRESS**

If your e-mail address changes, send a written request on letterhead to the ICHAT Coordinator requesting that your login/e-mail be changed. Please include your agency name, agency code, your name, telephone number and former login. Please allow 1-2 days for this change to occur. You will receive an e-mail confirming that the change was made.



## AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR

The primary contact person for your organization will serve as the “Agency Administrator”. Your agency’s primary contact person will need to contact our office after registration to let us know the user is ready to be upgraded to “Agency Administrator”. When doing so, please include your login e-mail, agency name and agency code. An Agency Administrator may only hold this title on one account at any given time and there should be only one Agency Administrator per account.

ICHAT Agency Administrators may add and delete login IDs (e-mail addresses) from the list of authorized users of an agency code. To do this, log into ICHAT, select the “My Account” feature on the left side of the screen and select the “Manage Agency Users” button.

To add a user, select either the “Add Agency User” or “New” buttons. A white box will appear on the right side of the screen. Enter the login ID (e-mail address) of the user you wish to authorize. Then select the “Save” button below the white box. Once you have added a user's login ID, they will need to register, if they have not yet done so, creating their own password. Be sure the new user has entered your agency code and checked the “Yes” box verifying you are a government or non-profit agency.

Agency Administrators may delete login IDs from the list of authorized users by two methods. First, they may select the “X” after the pencil next to the login ID then select “OK” on the pop-up box. Second, they may select the white box before their login ID, and then select the “Delete Rows” button.

Once a new user has been added, they will still need to register, if they have not yet done so, creating their own password at that time.

## CHANGE AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR

To change the Agency Administrator, send on your agency letterhead, a request to the ICHAT Coordinator explaining the change that is requested. Please include the name and contact information of the former Agency Administrator and the name, contact information and e-mail address of the new Agency Administrator. All correspondence to the ICHAT Coordinator should always include the agency name and agency code.

## BACKGROUND SEARCH

Below are steps to enter Information on the background search screen.

Complete all of the following fields: first name, last name, race (you may select unknown/other), gender, month of birth, day of birth, and year of birth (all four numbers).

ICHAT will not accept any spaces, suffixes or punctuation in the name fields, except for last name hyphens. (Example: Jean-Paul William O'Reilly-Van Dyke Jr would be entered Jeanpaul W Oreilly-Vandyke).

You may enter up to four versions of a person's name. (Example: Mary J Smith, Mary J Doe, Jane Smith, Jane Doe)

The SID field is for criminal record numbers only. This field can be left blank, unless you know their criminal record number.

Read the Usage Agreement and check the "Usage Agreement" box indicating you agree with the terms. If you do not agree, stop and discontinue usage of the ICHAT system.

When you are done entering information on the search page, either select the "Submit" or the "ENTER" key. Do not select "View Responses" until after the pop-up "Search in Progress" window has completed.



## HAVING PROBLEMS WITH A SEARCH

If you experience a problem with a particular search you were trying to conduct, below are a few suggestions that might be helpful.

Make sure you enter information correctly.

You must enter all of the following fields: first name, last name, race (you may select unknown/other), sex, month of birth, day of birth, and year of birth (all four numbers). If you enter an additional name, you must enter both an additional last name and an additional first name.

ICHAT will not accept any spaces, suffixes or punctuation in the name fields, except for last name hyphens; for instance JEAN-PAUL WILLIAM O'REILLY-VAN DYKE, JR. would be entered JEANPAUL W OREILLY-VANDYKE.

Disregard the SID field unless you have the SID number. This is not a required field.

If you continue to have problems, it may be a compatibility issue with your computer, browser or an issue with your computer's security settings. Compatibility issues are covered more thoroughly in the next page.



## COMPUTER COMPATIBILITY

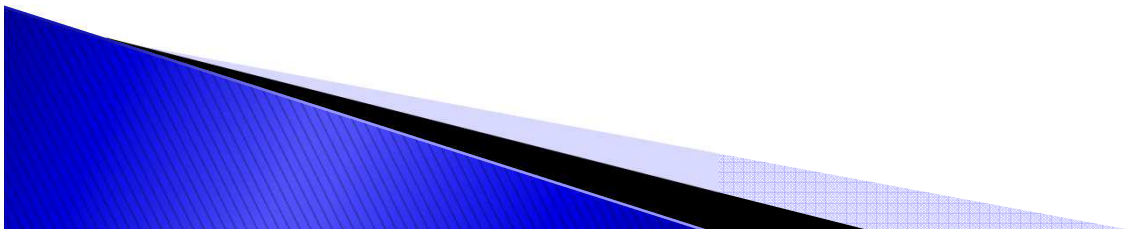
ICHAT use requires a minimum level of Internet browser access. Some examples include: Microsoft Internet Explorer version 5.5, Netscape Navigator version 7 or Firefox version 1.3.

If the problem is your security settings and you have Microsoft Internet Explorer, you may change the settings by opening up a browser window. Select “Tools” on the toolbar; scroll down and select “Internet Options”. Next, select the “Privacy” tab and then select the “Edit” button. In the “Address of Web site:” field, enter our website address ([www.michigan.gov/ichat](http://www.michigan.gov/ichat)); and then select “Allow”. Once you have done this continue clicking “OK” until you are out of the “Internet Options” section. If your Internet Explorer’s security settings was causing the problem, this should resolve that issue.

If you do not have Internet Explorer, please consult your internet browser’s instructions on how to allow interactions with specified websites such as ours.

If the problem persists, we would suggest accessing the Web site from a different computer, such as a friend or at a public library. You may even consider re-registering with a different valid e-mail address.

If you have additional questions, please refer to the FAQ’s link at the top of the ICHAT Web site or contact us directly.



## TO VIEW AND PRINT RESPONSES

When you are done running searches, select "Checkout" in the "Your Order" box. Then select "View Responses" on the "Shopping Cart" page. You will receive your response(s) while you are in the system. Select "View Responses" on the search page or "Search Results" on the left side of the screen. When the name you are searching appears, select the "View Results" box to the right of the person's name and the response will appear. You may print from there. If the person has a criminal history, you will need to use the "View Printer Friendly Results" option.

If the person you have searched does NOT have a criminal record, you may print the results simply by using your Internet browser's print function. On most Window-based systems, that is Ctrl-P or "Print" under the File menu.

If the person you have searched DOES have a criminal record, you may print the results by following these steps:

Select "Click here to open the Printer Friendly Version page!" link. This will cause the version to pop-up in a separate window. You may need to modify your browser to allow pop-ups. You also may need to hold the "Ctrl" button down on your keyboard while clicking on the button.

In the "Search Results – Printer Friendly Format" window, click the "Print" button right above the last name of the person searched. This will cause your printer window to open. Make sure the page range selected is "All" and then click "Print" in the printer window.

If you follow the instructions exactly and the complete criminal history report does not print, you will need to modify your printer options to allow the complete criminal record image to print.

If you cannot access the "Search Results — Printer Friendly Version" window to open and fully print your ICHAT report, we can provide the report by mail, fax or e-mail. Please contact the ICHAT help desk with your mailing address, fax number or ICHAT login ID. Also include the date of the search, your agency name, agency code, the e-mail address that made the search, and the name, date of birth, race and gender of the person who was searched.



## ICHAT RESPONSE

### No Match

If the Michigan State Police does not have a criminal history record that matches the information provided by the user, the ICHAT response will read:

"A search of Michigan's Criminal History File has not located a criminal record meeting dissemination criteria that exactly matches the information you have provided. No record has been found that matches on first name, last name, sex, and year of birth. Since arrests, convictions or criminal record deletions may occur at any time, do not use this information for future clearances."

### No Exact Match

If the rap sheet provided is not the person you were searching, then you have received an approximate match. Information that matched is highlighted in red. This is a successful "no criminal record" response for the search you conducted, along with a free second search for the nearest match. If you are confident the "nearest match" is not the person you are looking for, you can simply use the "no criminal record" result that precedes it. If the approximate match is close enough to worry you, there are instructions at the bottom of the "rap sheet" for a free, fingerprint-based record challenge that will prove whether or not this is the same person.

### Match

If the Michigan State Police ICHAT response hits on a criminal history, a "rap sheet" will be provided immediately for reviewing. Before you act upon the information contained within the record, please be sure the match is the person in question. You can do this by comparing the information contained on the record with the person's information. If the match is close, but not exact, there are instructions at the bottom of the "rap sheet" for a free, fingerprint-based record challenge that will prove whether or not this is the same person.



## MISSING INFORMATION

If a person has a criminal history that was not located by an ICHAT search, it could be due to one of following factors:

The criminal history occurred in the jurisdiction of another state, tribal, military or federal government agency. In this case, you will need to contact the relevant criminal history repository.

The criminal history may have been suppressed by a judge. In this case, we can release the information only to the person themselves, and even then only with fingerprints.

There may have been a public record, but it was not located because the data entered by the user did not match the data we have in our records. ICHAT searches require an exact match on last name, sex, and year of birth as well as an exact match on first name or match from a list of common first name variations. For example, a search for a record for "John Doe, male, and DOB: 07/04/1980" would match on Johnny Doe, but not on John Do.

While all felonies and serious misdemeanors that are punishable by 93 days or more are required to be reported to the Michigan State Police, cases where the maximum punishment is 92 days or less confinement are not required to be reported. The 90 and 92 day misdemeanors include local ordinance misdemeanors. It is also possible the arresting agency and/or court may have not reported the information to our office, as they are required to do under state law. In this case, you may wish to check either the arresting agency and/or court at which you believe the criminal history occurred. If in fact there is a Michigan public criminal history that was not reflected in ICHAT, you may wish to provide either the arresting agency and/or court a copy of the ICHAT report and this e-mail. They can send us a copy of either the arrest prints and/or the final conviction disposition so we can use the information to update our files.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We recommend that when conducting a background check on someone, you not only search them in ICHAT, but also in the Michigan Sex Offender Registry (SOR) and in the Michigan Department of Corrections tracking system (OTIS). Links to these sites are provided below.

Secretary of State for driving records: 517-322-1624

Michigan Public Sex Offender Registry: [www.mipsor.state.mi.us](http://www.mipsor.state.mi.us)

Offender Tracking Information System (OTIS): [www.michigan.gov/otis](http://www.michigan.gov/otis). This site contains information on all persons currently in the State of Michigan Department of Corrections as a prisoner, parolee, or out on probation.

## SURVEY

We value your feedback. If you have any comments, concerns or suggestions, please take our 30-second survey, send us an e-mail, or call our office. We would be happy to assist you. When taking the survey, please do not leave information that requires immediate attention. While we check our survey results regularly, immediate concerns should be sent using the contact information in the “Contact Us” section of this guide.

The survey link is:

<http://survey.vovici.com/se.ashx?s=6CAB81310C3C4E31>

SAVE THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FUTURE USE